



FIRST CRCT WALKING FESTIVAL IS A HUGE SUCCESS

A week full of walking, coupled with a week full of sunshine, made for an excellent first Walking Festival in this part of Fife. Marilyn Edwards, the organiser, said “We were delighted with how many folk registered for walks and everyone said it was lovely to meet new people and experience something different from more usual walks.”

The Festival hosted sixteen walks spanning over nine days, varying in length from short, historic interest walks to ten mile walks with great views. Some absorbed the wonderful coastal vistas and others inland over the Binn Hill giving panoramic views right across Fife. A visit to Glassmount House gardens was a real treat with many plants still flowering after such a beautiful summer and wonderful garden buildings. Another treat was a Nordic Walking taster session around the Black Rock at Pettycur Bay led by local instructor Judith Frame. Other outings featured bird watching and natural history. The heritage walks for Kinghorn and Burntisland were very popular. On the second Saturday, we had a graveyard tour at Auchtertool Kirk. This followed a route that is maintained by Kirkton Farm for the community and a new section, recently cleared by the Fife Council Access Team along with local volunteers and Community Payback. The group heard all about the old church and graveyard stories before returning to the village for lunch.

The whole event, which had great support from experienced local walk leaders, had 80 participants and a footfall of 130 over all the walks. Marilyn commented “It just shows that a local based Walking Festival, free to all, is attractive and enjoyable to many people”.

Full report of Walking Festival on www.craigenalttrust.org.uk/



Rossend Castle



Seals at Seafield



North Glassmount Gardens



Wildlife watching at Seafield



NEXT FRIENDS EVENT
Annual Meeting & Social
Monday, November 17th
The Sands Hotel, Burntisland
7.30 – 9 pm
Finger buffet
Annual Photo Competition

Kinghorn Pathways Walking Group by Kathleen Curley

As an incomer to Fife I have to start by saying what a beautiful part of the country this is. Within days of moving here I discovered the natural beauty that lies on our doorstep affording both stunning seascapes and landscapes, ever changing with weather and season.

The walks this year took place on the first Wednesday of every month and lasted approximately 2 hours. All were enjoyable and I have to say the walks I particularly enjoyed were those when people shared their knowledge of the geology and history of the area, really bringing the walks to life. Another facet to the walks was the cup of coffee and chat which took place in the Carousel after the walks!

Walk 1, on 2nd April, took us from the lochside along the Burnside Path, past the Golf Club and Grangehill Farm. We crossed the road and followed the path to Binnend, then along the edge of the field to the new Rodanbraes Path and down into Craigencait.

On 7th May we took cars to Inverteil and walked on the Quarry Road past Inverteil Farm. We turned right and went past Balwearie Mill and Tower and out to the Auchtertool Road as far as Raith Lake, continuing past the Mill Dam to Kirkcaldy Golf Club, under the railway bridge and back onto the Quarry Road. The bluebells were in abundance!

On 4th June we went up past Craigencait Cottages onto the Kissing Trees Road, turned left onto the Standing Stones Road, past Glassmount House and another left turn took us onto the Common Road. We chose to take the path along the edge of the field leading to Rodanbraes and back to the lochside.

The 2nd July saw us taking cars again, this time to Kilrie Woods car park on the Quarry Road. We crossed the road and walked to Balmuto Castle, past Mourn House and Lamberts Mill before returning to the cars. This walk was made all the more interesting with the snippets of history we heard along the way. The August walk was cancelled due to weather.

On 3rd September we went along the lochside, past the hide to the start of Rodanbraes where we veered left to the road and took the path to Kinghorn, which affords on its route, a lovely view of the loch and farm. We then went past Grangehill Farm and the Golf Club and down into Kinghorn. From the town we took the Myre Track back to the Kissing Trees Road and lochside. Apart from August, the weather was kind to us this year.

October's planned walk is up to Binnend, down to the Sands Hotel and back to Kinghorn via the beach.

September KINGHORN LOCH BIRD REPORT by Danny Wallace

Summer has come to an end but by mid September, it didn't quite feel like Autumn either. Swallows, House Martins, Chiffchaffs, Willow Warblers and Blackcaps are all still here though we can't know for sure if they are our summer residents or other birds on passage south. The loch seems to be abundant with small fry and the Little Grebe seem to be availing themselves but don't seem quite to have produced as many young as previously. We do however have a Kingfisher making regular visits and it has been seen several times over the past few days. Still no sign though of the Great Crested Grebes that bred this year with moderate success and even attempted a second brood at the end of July. But they suddenly abandoned the idea and left taking their teenage broods with them. Unusual really, as last year they stayed on for the winter...they may yet return. No sign of Mink/Otter but you never know and there is a rumour amongst fisherman of the return of the latter. The fishermen are having a bumper autumn with double figure carp dying to get caught. Coot numbers are also down for the time of year and it doesn't seem like there were as many youngsters as previously, though the opposite is true of Moorhen with plenty of juveniles on the loch. Once the vegetation dies back we may get a glimpse of Water Rail and certainly I managed to spy a juvenile skulking about the NE corner during the summer.

The first winter visitors have already arrived in the form of Wigeon ducks.

Two adults flew over recently but we do have a juvenile present near the jetty. The jetty is also the place to look for another bird possibly on passage south, namely the Grey Wagtail.

The Mute Swan cygnet is our success story this year. Its been some years since a cygnet hatched here and it's already looking pretty mean and feisty and was having a go at the geese recently. Certainly the Swans keeping the domestic geese in check can't be a bad thing!



Mute Swans on Loch

**CRCT Friends Presentation
Water Improvement in Kinghorn Loch
By Dr Bryan Spears and Justyna Olszewska**

On 22nd September forty friends and guests of CRCT gathered in the Community Centre and were treated to a thorough update by Justyna Olszewska and Dr Bryan Spears of the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology, Edinburgh, of the scientific research being carried out on the loch.

Justyna's study follows thirty years after pollution was removed from the loch and after my own research into the effects of the pollution and its removal. From 1950's to 1983 liquor from Whinnyhall Red Mud landfill site polluted the loch and by the 1980's there were no fish or plants in the loch other than arsenic-tolerant midge larvae (blood worms) and blue-green algal blooms. Red Mud is the solid residue of bauxite when product alumina is dissolved out, using caustic soda.



Justyna, Marilyn and Bryan

Alumina is used as an abrasive, and in cosmetics as whitener and cleanser in toothpaste, etc. The pH had risen above 10.5 and dissolved arsenic was around 500 parts per billion

(the highest for any water course in Britain and ten times the environmental quality standard).

Arsenic and vanadium were taken into the sediments at up to around 800 parts per million and will essentially be there forever. After 1983 the pH and metal concentrations in the water dropped to "normal" levels and so they have remained.

In late 1990's problems with rampant blue-green algal blooms returned and the Kinghorn Loch Users Group (now part of CRCT) worked to eradicate this with barley straw treatment rafts, which have been vastly more successful than any of us might have hoped. Rooted water plants are now abundant and, whilst this is a practical problem, it will keep algae away. Fish and water birds are very healthy.

Justyna's study in 2012 and 2013 found that concentrations in sediments remained as high as ever, but with low concentrations of arsenic and vanadium in the water. However, the plants accumulated the metals to differing extents but always above "normal". The vast majority of the concentration is, however, in the roots. While the foliage dies back in autumn the roots remain. Some elevation of metals was found in snails but not in roach. Unfortunately carp could not be sampled. The question was raised as to whether the very healthy diversity of plant and animal life in the loch is "stress-free" or whether the species found are actually attuned to the contaminants in their environment. Bryan Spears indicated that possibly this could be investigated by DNA analysis to see if "stress" was involved.

Justyna offered the following interim conclusions from her research:

- Red mud pollution appears to drive multiple ecological pressures in contaminated lakes.
- Recovery can take decades and is pollutant specific.
- Sediments in Kinghorn Loch are still contaminated after 30 years and will remain so for many decades.
- Pollutant cycling between sediments and water column is still evident 30 years following management.
- Arsenic, vanadium and chromium are accumulated in the aquatic food web after 30 years of recovery but whether this is "stressed", "adapted" or "healthy" is not yet fully understood.

The very interesting talk concluded with a veritable barrage of excellent and inquisitive questions from the audience and everybody went away enlightened and wanting more.

Report by Dr Ron Edwards, October 2014

Images of Kinghorn Loch 2014

Remember to enter your photos for the PHOTO Competition



wildlife area from bird hide



bird watching



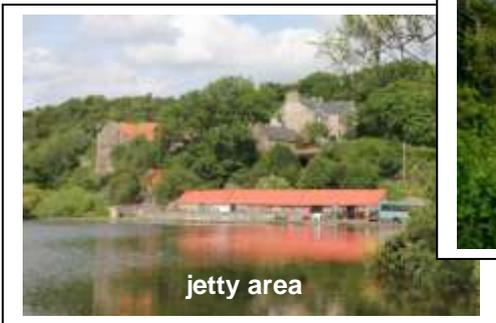
winter sailing



canoeing



little Grebe



jetty area



Kinghorn Loch



straw raft



open water swimming



barley straw for rafts



come and try day

If you wish to support the aims of Craigenalt Rural Community Trust (CRCT) and become involved, either as a volunteer helper or as a supporter, become a Friend of the Trust by asking for an application form or emailing info@CraigenaltTrust.org.uk

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